

International Travel and Migration: November 2012

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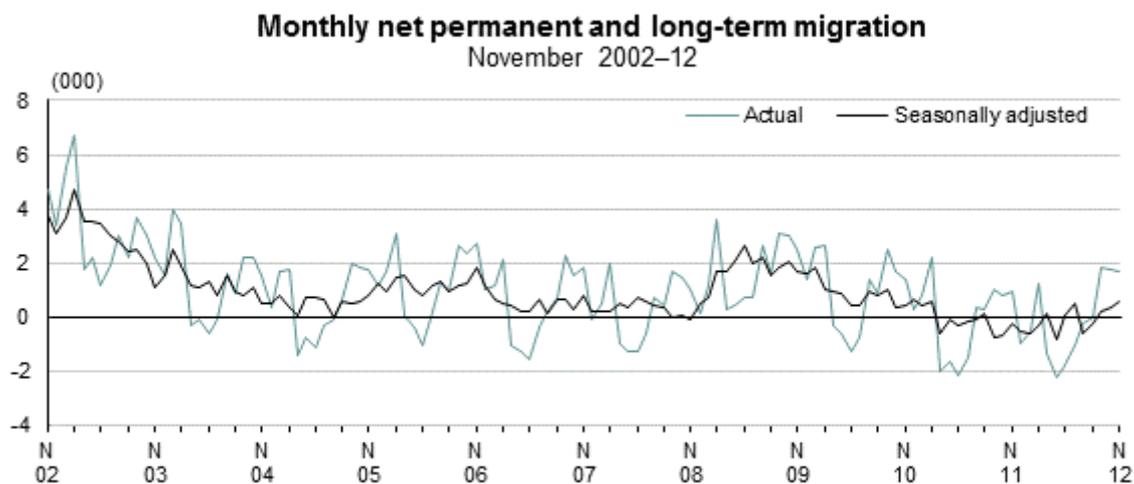
Key facts

In November 2012 compared with November 2011:

- Visitor arrivals (232,100) were up 1,800. The biggest changes were in arrivals from:
 - China (up 3,300)
 - Australia (up 2,300)
 - the United States (down 1,200)
 - the United Kingdom (down 2,200).
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (173,200) were down 1,400. The biggest changes were in departures to:
 - Korea (down 700)
 - Australia (down 1,500).

In November 2012:

- Seasonally adjusted figures showed a net gain of 600 migrants.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

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Government Statistician

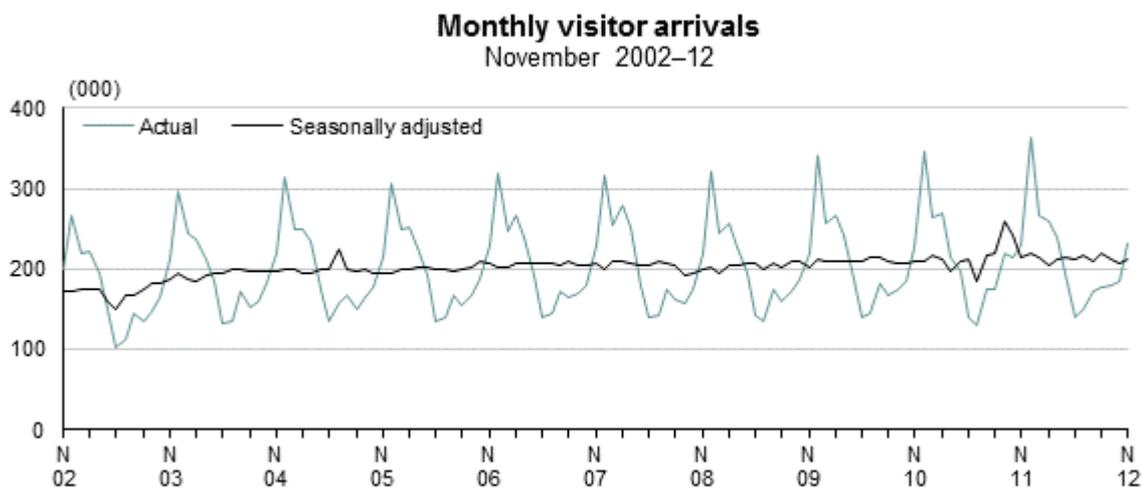
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Commentary

- November visitor arrivals increase
- China overtakes UK as second-biggest annual source of visitors
- Fewer resident departures in November
- New Zealand residents take more trips in the November 2012 year
- Net gain of 600 migrants in November
- Net migration loss in the November 2012 year

November visitor arrivals increase

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 232,100 in November 2012. This was up 1 percent from November 2011 (230,300).



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Visitor arrivals by country of residence

The biggest changes in visitors by country of residence between November 2011 and November 2012 were in arrivals from:

- China (up 3,300)
- Australia (up 2,300)
- the United States (down 1,200)
- the United Kingdom (down 2,200).

Visitor arrivals from China numbered 21,800 in November 2012 – the highest ever for a November month, and an increase of 18 percent from the November 2011 figure (18,600).

Within Australia, there were more visitors from Victoria (up 2,400) and Western Australia (up 1,200) but fewer from Queensland (down 1,000).

Arrivals from the United Kingdom have decreased in most months since April 2007, just after the start of the global economic downturn.

Visitor arrivals by travel purpose

The biggest changes in visitors by travel purpose between November 2011 and November 2012 were in arrivals for:

- visiting friends and relatives (up 1,700)
- conferences/conventions (down 1,500).

Visits from Australia contributed most to the change in arrivals to visit friends and relatives (up 1,200) and the decrease in arrivals for conferences/conventions (down 1,100). The number of arrivals for conferences/conventions varies depending on the events being held in New Zealand.

Holiday visitor arrivals in November 2012 (109,800) were similar to November 2011 (110,000), but there were differences by country. China (up 2,500) and Australia (up 2,000) contributed more holiday arrivals, offset by fewer from the United Kingdom (down 2,000), Germany, and the United States (each down 700).

China overtakes UK as second-biggest annual source of visitors

There were 2.565 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the November 2012 year. This was down 1 percent from the November 2011 year (2.583 million), which was boosted by visitor arrivals for the Rugby World Cup.

Visitor arrivals from China (194,800) were up 53,500 from the November 2011 year. This increase, coupled with a decrease in visitors from the United Kingdom (down 40,400 to 191,400), saw China become New Zealand's second-biggest source of visitors. Australia remains the biggest source, supplying 1.158 million visitors in the November 2012 year. In percentage terms, Australia accounted for 45 percent of all visitors to New Zealand, and China 8 percent.

There has been dramatic growth in arrivals from China over the past 20 years. In the year ended November 1992, there were just 3,300 visitors. This rose to 74,300 visitors in 2002.

Holidaymakers made up 71 percent of visitor arrivals from China in the November 2012 year. A further 12 percent were in New Zealand to visit friends and relatives, while 8 percent arrived on business.

The median length of stay for Chinese visitors in the November 2012 year was 3.5 days, compared with 8.7 days for all visitors. The median age of visitors from China was 47 years, older than the median age of 40 years for all visitors. Of those visitors from China who stated a province, around half lived in Shanghai, Beijing (each 17 percent), and Guangdong province (14 percent).

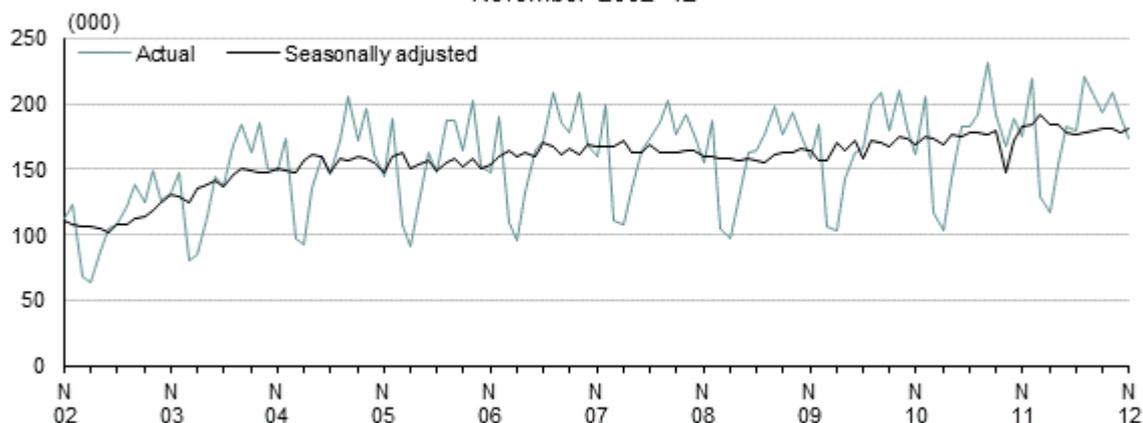
For more detailed data about visitor arrivals, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Fewer resident departures in November

New Zealand residents departed on 173,200 overseas trips in November 2012, down 1 percent from November 2011. Many residents delayed travel until after the Rugby World Cup, resulting in more trips in November 2011 (174,600). The November 2012 figure is still higher than the 160,800 trips taken in November 2010.

Monthly overseas trips by New Zealand residents

November 2002–12



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Overseas trips by country of main destination

The biggest changes in overseas trips by country of main destination (where the person will spend the most time when overseas) between November 2011 and November 2012 were in trips to:

- Korea (down 700)
- Australia (down 1,500).

New Zealand residents take more trips in the November 2012 year

Trips by New Zealand residents in the November 2012 year (2.171 million) rose 4 percent from the November 2011 year (2.080 million).

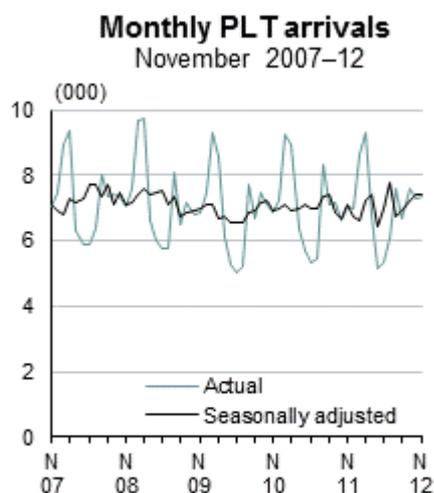
The biggest increases were in trips to Australia (up 24,300) and the United States (up 17,800). Over recent decades, changes in the number of trips to the United States have followed changes in the exchange rate.

In the November 2012 year, more trips were also made to a number of Pacific island destinations, including Fiji (up 4,800), the Cook Islands (up 4,400), and Samoa (up 3,800). There were also more trips to Japan (up 3,600), Thailand (up 3,500), and India (up 3,400).

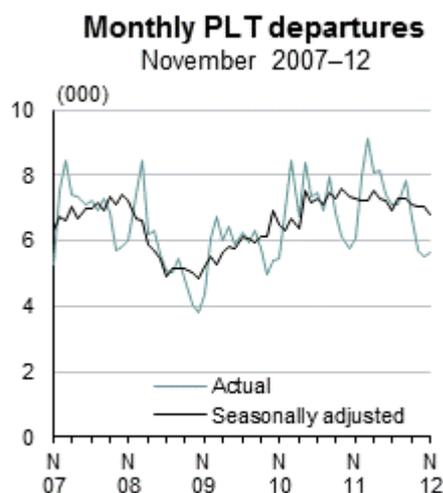
For more detailed data on overseas trips by New Zealand residents, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Net gain of 600 migrants in November

Seasonally adjusted permanent and long-term (PLT) migration figures showed a net gain (more arrivals than departures) of 600 migrants in November 2012. This is the highest seasonally adjusted net gain of migrants since December 2010 (700).



Source: Statistics New Zealand



Source: Statistics New Zealand

There was a seasonally adjusted net loss of 2,800 migrants to Australia in November 2012. This is the lowest net loss to Australia since February 2011 (2,500), and is below the average of 3,300 between March 2011 and October 2012. The change in November 2012 was due to more arrivals from and fewer departures to Australia.

Since the start of the series in 1996, the highest ever net loss to Australia was 4,300 in February 2001. This was just before the eligibility of New Zealand citizens to access certain welfare benefits in Australia was changed on 26 February 2001.

Net migration loss in the November 2012 year

Unadjusted figures showed there were 84,600 PLT arrivals in the November 2012 year, just above the 84,400 migrants in the November 2011 year. PLT departures numbered 86,200, up from 85,000 the previous year. This resulted in a net loss of 1,600 migrants in the November 2012 year.

New Zealand has experienced many periods of net migration loss. The highest net loss since the PLT migration series started (in April 1921) was 43,600 people in the July 1979 year.

A net loss of 38,800 people to Australia contributed to New Zealand's net loss of migrants in the November 2012 year. This is down from the record net loss of 40,000 in the August 2012 year. The November figure resulted from 53,500 departures to Australia, offset by 14,600 arrivals from Australia. In both directions, most migrants were New Zealand citizens.

There were net gains of migrants from most other countries in the November 2012 year, led by:

- the United Kingdom (5,600)
- China (5,200)
- India (5,000)
- the Philippines (2,100)
- Germany (1,600)
- Ireland (1,200).

For more detailed data about permanent and long-term migration, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Definitions

About the international travel and migration statistics

International travel and migration statistics count passengers arriving into and departing from New Zealand. Passengers are split into one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

Arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand resident travellers are key indicators of tourism and travel. Permanent and long-term migration is a component of New Zealand's population change (along with births and deaths), measuring changes in the characteristics of the population as well as population size.

More definitions

Citizenship: determined from the country that issued the passport the person uses when arriving or departing. A person may hold passports from more than one country.

Country of main destination: the country where a New Zealand-resident traveller will spend the most time while overseas. Departure cards do not ask travellers which other countries they intend to visit on the same trip.

Country of residence: for arrivals, this is the country where the person last lived for 12 months or more. For departures, it is the country where the person will next live for 12 months or more.

New Zealand-resident travellers: people who live in New Zealand and are travelling overseas for less than 12 months.

Overseas visitors: people who live overseas and are visiting New Zealand for less than 12 months.

Passenger type: each passenger is classed as an overseas visitor, a New Zealand-resident traveller, or a permanent and long-term migrant. Passenger type is not related to legal permanent residence in a country or the visa type a person holds. It is based on the time spent in and out of New Zealand. This is primarily determined from responses on the arrival and departure cards to questions about how long the person is in or away from New Zealand, and where they last lived and will next live for 12 months or more.

Permanent and long-term arrivals: people from overseas arriving to live in New Zealand for 12 months or more (including permanently), and New Zealanders returning after an absence of 12 months or more overseas.

Permanent and long-term departures: New Zealanders departing for an absence of 12 months or more (including permanently), and people from overseas who are departing after a stay of 12 months or more in New Zealand.

Travel purpose: the main purpose for the visit to New Zealand or trip overseas. Categories are holiday, visiting friends and relatives, business, conferences and conventions, education, and other.

Related links

Upcoming releases

International Travel and Migration: December 2012 will be released on 1 February 2013.

[Subscribe to information releases](#), including this one, by completing the online subscription form.

[The release calendar](#) lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

Past releases

[International Travel and Migration](#) has links to past releases.

Related information

Information about international travel

[International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand](#) contains detailed tables about the number and characteristics of visitor arrivals. It is released two working days after each International Travel and Migration information release.

[Provisional international travel statistics](#) provide the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. These are released weekly, usually at 3pm on a Friday.

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analyses of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Tourism](#) web page lists tourism-related data sources, such as the Accommodation Survey and the Tourism Satellite Account.

[Tourism research and data](#) from the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment includes results from the International Visitor Survey, Domestic Travel Survey, and tourism forecasts.

[Tourism New Zealand](#) provides guides to New Zealand's key tourism markets, which include the outlook for future months.

Information about international migration

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analyses of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Migration](#) web page lists migration-related data sources, such as the Longitudinal Immigration Survey.

[Labour and Immigration Research Centre](#), part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, publishes research reports and information about the immigration research programme.

Immigration New Zealand statistics include application and approval numbers for the main immigration visa types.

Data quality

Period specific information

This section contains information that has changed since the last release.

- [Removal of Infoshare time series](#)

General information

This section has information that does not generally change between releases.

- [Data source](#)
- [Accuracy of the data](#)
- [Interpreting the data](#)
- [Timing of published data](#)
- [Confidentiality](#)
- [More information](#)

Period specific information

Removal of Infoshare time series

The Infoshare time series 'Permanent & long-term migration totals' was removed from the ITM group on 30 November 2012. All of the data from this series can be found in the new series 'Permanent & long-term migration key series'. This new series, which was released in September 2012, also contains seasonally adjusted and trend data on migration to and from Australia, as well as on migration of New Zealand and non-New Zealand citizens. We have published a [concordance between the old and new Infoshare series](#) in Excel format.

General information

Data source

International travel and migration statistics are based on electronic arrival and departure records for each international passenger, supplied to Statistics NZ by the New Zealand Customs Service. These electronic records include flight and passport details, such as date of travel, date of birth, sex, and country of citizenship.

The New Zealand Customs Service also supplies Statistics NZ with arrival and departure cards completed by passengers. Additional detail such as country of residence and travel purpose is captured from these cards and added to the information from electronic records.

Arrival and departure cards are owned by Immigration New Zealand, and are used to administer numerous New Zealand laws in addition to the production of statistics. Statistics NZ captures information from the cards only for statistical purposes, and passes the cards to Immigration NZ after data capture is complete.

See the [arrival card](#) (PDF, 84kb). See the [departure card](#). These are for reference only.

Accuracy of the data

Data collection

Statistics NZ scans every arrival and departure card, and uses image recognition technology to automatically recognise and code responses. Processing staff then manually capture any required information not captured automatically – as not every response can be clearly recognised by automated software.

The imaging system automatically determines all of the information required for around 9 in every 10 cards, meaning about 1 million records are completed manually each year.

Some response fields are required from every card. These include passport number and birth date, which are used to match each card with the corresponding electronic record containing flight and passport details. Some fields are only required for certain passenger types, or for a sample of passengers.

Changes in recorded passenger intentions

All arrivals and departures are processed so they can be allocated to one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

A person may change their intentions after their arrival or departure, which may mean the recorded passenger type becomes incorrect. Statistics NZ does not revise published statistics to adjust for such changes.

Sampling

Some fields are only collected for a sample of passengers. Data from the sample is used to estimate the characteristics of the full population. This still provides a good picture of the characteristics of travellers, while greatly decreasing the time and cost of capturing the data.

All figures for permanent and long-term migrants are actual counts (not derived from a sample). Arrival and departure totals for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers are also actual counts. More detailed data for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers, such as figures by country or travel purpose, are derived from a sample.

The sample ratios currently used are:

- Overseas visitor arrivals: 1 in 16
- Overseas visitor departures: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: 1 in 20.

Figures derived from a sample may contain sample error (a difference from the actual figure). Small numbers are more likely to contain a large sample error as a percentage of the actual figure, and should be used with caution.

[Information about international travel and migration](#) has tables showing the sample errors for selected cell sizes.

Seasonally adjusted and trend series

The purpose of seasonally adjusting a time series is to measure and remove the varying seasonal components in the series (for example, there are more visitor arrivals during the New Zealand summer, due to the warmer weather and longer daylight hours). This makes the data for adjacent periods more comparable.

The seasonal adjustment process for international travel and migration statistics uses Statistics NZ's standard seasonal adjustment package, X-12-ARIMA, with enhancements that allow the specification and adjustment of additional calendar effects. These include the number and type of trading days in the month (as more people generally arrive and depart on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), and holiday periods, which have important effects on travel but can occur in different months each year (eg Easter can be in March or April).

Both monthly and quarterly seasonally adjusted series are available. The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. Hence, quarterly figures may not equal the sum of monthly seasonally adjusted figures.

Seasonally adjusted and trend data back to January 1996 is subject to revision each period. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the periods immediately before the current month or quarter. Data before January 1996 is not revised. This cut-off is used because of the change to a four-term school year in 1996, which resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand-resident traveller series.

Interpreting the data

Passenger counts

The statistics in this release relate to the number of passenger movements to and from New Zealand, rather than to the number of people – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately. For example, a New Zealand resident making five business trips overseas within a year would be counted as five arrivals and five departures.

Timing of published data

Final international travel and migration statistics: released approximately three weeks after the end of the reference month. This delay is longer for December and January data due to the peak travel period coinciding with the Christmas and New Year holidays.

New Zealand and overseas port data: becomes available two working days after the international travel and migration release.

Provisional international travel statistics: normally released at 3pm every Friday on the [Provisional international travel statistics](#) web page. These show the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. No further data is available until the monthly release of final statistics.

Confidentiality

Statistics NZ releases statistics derived from arriving and departing passenger records. It does not release the records of individual passengers.

More information

[Information about international travel and migration.](#)

Liability

While all care and diligence has been used in processing, analysing, and extracting data and information in this publication, Statistics NZ gives no warranty it is error-free and will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the use directly, or indirectly, of the information in this publication.

Timing

Our information releases are delivered electronically by third parties. Delivery may be delayed by circumstances outside our control. Statistics NZ does not accept responsibility for any such delay.

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Tables

The following tables are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box. If you have problems viewing the files, see [Opening files and PDFs](#).

1. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, actual counts
2. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, seasonally adjusted and trend series
3. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by travel purpose and country of last permanent residence
5. Short-term New Zealand-resident traveller departures, by country of main destination
6. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
7. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
8. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
9. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship, actual counts
10. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship, seasonally adjusted series

Access more data on Infoshare

Use [Infoshare](#) to access time-series data specific to your needs. For this release, select the following categories from the Infoshare home page:

Subject category: **Tourism**

Group: **International Travel and Migration**